

War Powers Bill Is OK'd in House

Washington

After a long deliberation, a House foreign affairs subcommittee approved a bill yesterday curbing the president's power to wage undeclared war. The bill is tougher than the one the traditionally less hawkish Senate voted last year and is considering again.

The main provision in each bill states that when a president commits U.S. forces abroad without congressional approval, he must stop unless Congress gives its approval within a specified time. But in several particulars the House panel headed by Representative Clement Zablocki (Dem-Wis.), which last year put through the house a bill requiring only that the Pres-

ident report his actions to Congress. Zablocki, who had been a loyal supporter of administration policy on the Indochina war, conceded that he and many of his colleagues have changed their views.

The administration has strongly opposed the legislation. President Nixon presumably would veto it, if the bill does clear Congress.

The House bill states that the President should consult Congress in advance "in every possible instance" before committing armed forces to hostilities or to situations where hostilities may be imminent."

If the President does commit armed forces without a declaration of war or sends troops abroad equipped for combat, the bill says, he must report to Congress within 48 hours the reasons,

legal authority, scope and estimated cost of the operation. If Congress is not in session, its leaders could request the President to call a special session.

The bill further provides that the President must stop the operation unless Congress approves it within 120 days, and that Congress may order him to stop even within that 120-day period by a concurrent resolution approved by both houses. Such a regulation does not require the President's signature and thus could not be vetoed.

The Senate bill requires the President to stop unless Congress gives its approval within 30 days and permits Congress to order him to stop within that time by passage of a bill — which he could veto. A veto can be overridden only by a two-thirds vote of both houses.

The House subcommittee approved the longer period of 120 days on grounds that in the early days of a Vietnam or similar situation Congress would be most likely to give the President a show of patriotic support. It might withhold this support if after more time the operation appeared not essential to the national security.

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